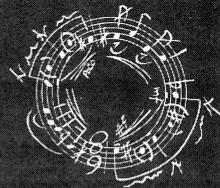


# esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk music director & conductor



# messages

featuring the music of György Kurtág (Hungary)  
and R. Murray Schafer (Canada)



György Kurtág

Sunday, April 7, 2002 8:00 pm

Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, Toronto

# **esprit orchestra**

Alex Pauk music director & conductor

## esprit musicians

### **violin 1**

Fujiko Imajishi  
Parmela Attariwala  
Anne Armstrong  
Paul Zevenhuizen  
Nancy Kershaw  
Michael Sproule

### **violin 2**

Jayne Maddison  
James Aylesworth  
Ronald Mah  
Corey Gemmell  
Louise Pauls  
Nicole Zarry

### **viola**

Douglas Perry  
Beverley Spotton  
Angela Rudden  
Rhyll Peel

### **cello**

Paul Widner  
Elaine Thompson  
Marianne Pack  
Sharon Prater

### **bass**

Tom Hazlitt  
Robert Speer

### **flute / piccolo**

Douglas Stewart

### **flute / alto flute / piccolo**

Christine Little

### **bass flute / piccolo**

Maria Pelletier

### **oboe**

Lesley Young

### **oboe / EH**

Karen Rotenberg

### **clarinet**

Max Christie

### **clarinet / bass clarinet /**

### **harmonica**

Richard Thomson

### **clarinet / harmonica**

Greg James

### **contrabass clarinet**

Ken Fudurich

### **bassoon / harmonica**

Gerald Robinson

### **Bassoon / contra**

William Cannaway

### **harmonica**

Ian Harper

### **horn**

Gary Pattison

Vincent Barbee

Deborah Stroh

Linda Bronicheski

### **trumpet**

Stuart Laughton  
Raymond Tizzard

### **trombone**

Robert Ferguson

### **trombone / harmonica**

David Archer

### **bass trombone**

Herbert Poole

### **tuba**

Scott Irvine

### **harp**

Erica Goodman

### **piano**

Lydia Wong  
Gregory Oh

### **celeste**

Greg Millar

### **cimbalom**

Richard Moore

### **percussion**

Blair Mackay  
Trevor Tureski  
Ryan Scott  
Mark Duggan

### **timpani**

Michael Perry

# **about esprit**

**Award-winning Esprit Orchestra was formed in 1983 by Composer / Conductor Alex Pauk to give Canadians new music and to champion new music by Canadian Composers.** As we approach our important 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary milestone, Esprit remains among a handful of new music orchestras worldwide, making Canada a world leader in the composition, performance and production of new music. Named *Musician of the Year* in 1999 by the Toronto Musicians' Association, **Esprit's Music Director Alex Pauk has to date commissioned well over 70 musical works by more than 50 outstanding Canadian composers.**

**Esprit is unique not only in performing a repertoire of contemporary classical music with an emphasis on commissioning, performing and promoting Canadian composers, Esprit regularly premieres and records new works by top Canadian and International composers, ensembles and solo artists.** This season, Esprit performed the North American premiere of *Concerto Grosso* by famed polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki, *Here (to be found)* by The Netherlands' Michel van der Aa, and tonight's *Messages* by Hungarian Composer György Kurtág. Within our 2002/03 concert season, Esprit worked in partnership with the Consulate of the Netherlands for an important Dutch-Canadian cultural exchange, the Consulate of Poland and with the Consulate of Hungary to present **concerts that truly span musical cultures.**

**Esprit also presents spirited concert events which include other artistic disciplines and embrace new media.** Recently, Esprit partnered with Rhombus Media, marble-media and Bravo!FACT to produce the tragic opera buffa, *Toothpaste*, on video with interactive DVD and Web site (which can be seen online at [www.toothpastetv.com](http://www.toothpastetv.com)).

**Esprit's Toward A Living Art Education Program (TALA)** has been in effect since the orchestra began and continues to guide young audiences through the familiar and challenging terrain of new music. To help someone you know to enjoy Esprit's music all year, simply Sponsor-a-Student as part of our Student Ticketing Program by calling our Box Office at 416-366-7723.

During Esprit's March 1<sup>st</sup> School Concert, Esprit hosted about 400 students from across the GTA. Young people had the chance to hear celebrated violist Rivka Golani and to learn about the art of composition from composers Brian Current, Jose Evangelista and Alexina Louie.

March 2, compositional students from Unionville High School presented 'tween with visiting Netherlands' artist Ron Ford to thundering applause.

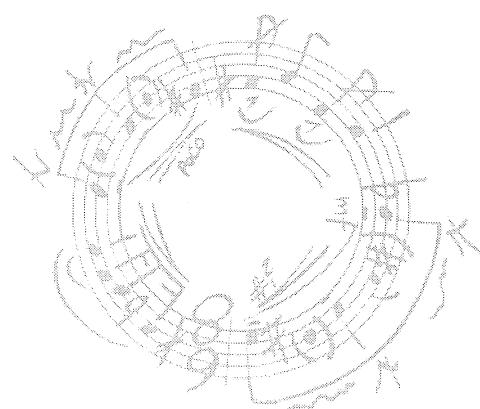
TALA receives support from the Toronto, Ontario and Canada Arts Councils, Harold E. Ballard Foundation, SOCAN Foundation, Trillium Foundation, and others. **Over 10,000 school children, many hearing new music for the first time, have participated.** For information on how you and the young people you know can participate, contact Esprit at 416-815-7887.

Esprit champions Canada's brightest "young" composers, this year with our first successful Young Composers Festival, *The Weekend*, which brought over 20 talented composers together to meet Esprit, one another and you, their new audience.

Celebrated film directors Atom Egoyan, Don McKellar and Jeremy Podeswa have all used Esprit in soundtrack recording. CBC regularly broadcasts Esprit's concerts. For information, see the **Two New Hours** listing in this programme and notice on the contents page.

Esprit gratefully acknowledges the support of all the arts organizations, foundations, corporations and individuals who have helped us fulfill our programming goals in our exciting 2001/02 Season. Please see **Acknowledgements** for a listing of Esprit's generous supporters. Also, see **Sponsoring Esprit for information about opportunities and how you can get involved today!**

Don't forget to renew your subscription for our exciting 2002/03 concert series. Call our box office at 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708 6754



# **esprit orchestra**

Alex Pauk, music director & conductor

# **messages**

Sunday, April 7, 2002

Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre

## **Programme**

7:15 pm      **Pre-concert talk**

8:00 pm      György Kurtág (Hungary)  
*... quasi una fantasia... op. 27*  
for piano & groups of instruments  
\* featuring pianist Lydia Wong

## **INTERMISSION**

György Kurtág (Hungary)  
*Messages*  
North American Premiere

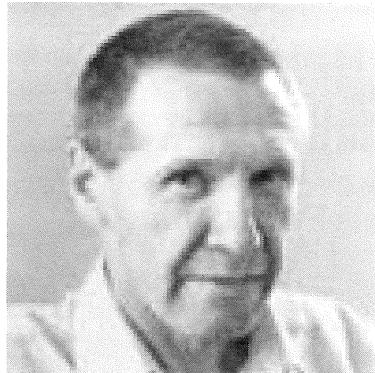
## **INTERMISSION**

R. Murray Schafer (Canada)  
*Four-Forty*  
for string quartet & chamber orchestra  
\* featuring The Molinari Quartet

**Note:** György Kurtág regrets that he could not be in attendance due to doctor's orders.

**Special Thanks** to the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation whose assistance to Esprit under the Strategic Initiatives Program continues to help us attain our goals. We also thank The Ontario Trillium Foundation and the SOCAN Foundation for their ongoing support.

This evening's performances are being recorded by CBC Radio Two's *Two New Hours* (94.1), produced by David Jaeger and hosted by Larry Lake. It will be broadcast for your listening pleasure on April 21, 2002.



## **György Kurtág (Hungary)**

Composer

Born February 19, 1926 in (then) Lugoj, Romania, György Kurtág studied piano early on with Magda Kardos, and studied composition with Max Eisikovits in Timisoara. When his family moved to Budapest, he enrolled in the Academy of Music in 1946 where he was taught by Sándor Veress and Ferenc Farkas (composition), Pál Kadósa (piano) and Leó Weiner (chamber music), and his fellow students included Hungary's other great living composer, Ligeti. In 1957 and 1958 in Paris, Kurtág studied composition with Milhaud and Messiaen. While in Paris, he met and was deeply influenced by Hungarian psychologist, Marianne Stein who suggested a remedy for a crisis of artistic confidence: A return to musical first principles to deepen an understanding of how one note connects with another. One early result of Kurtág's taking this advice to heart was the Wind Quintet, Op2. After rethinking his ideas on composition while in Paris, he returned to Budapest to write his opus 1, a string quartet.

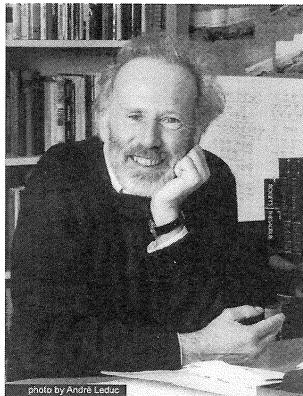
In Budapest from 1958-63, Kurtág worked as a répétiteur with the Béla Bartók Music Secondary School. Between 1960 and 1980, he was répétiteur with soloists of the National Philharmonia. From 1967 he was assistant to Pál Kadósa at the Academy of Music, and the following year he was appointed professor of chamber music. Kurtág held this position until he retired in 1986. Subsequently, he continued teaching at the Academy until 1993.

With the 1990s came increased freedom of movement. Increasingly, he worked outside of Hungary – in 1993 and 1994 as composer in residence with the Berlin Philharmonic, in 1995 with the Vienna Konzerthaus, from

1996 to 1998 in the Netherlands, and between 1998 and 1999, he worked again in Berlin. Currently, Kurtág resides in Paris at the invitation of the Ensemble InterContemporain, Cité de la Musique and the Festival d'Automne.

## Highlights

- One of Hungary's leading composer
- Shows an understanding of the human condition which communicates to audiences, making Kurtág one of the most frequently played contemporary composers, worldwide
- Heir to Webernian expressionism, favouring concentrated miniatures exploring a wide range of human emotions; he has been described as "*a chronicler of the absurd*" and a "*master of the miniature*."
- Music reflects his Hungarian roots – the folk-based idioms also heard in Bartok, Kodaly and Liszt – and his strong affinity with the European avant-garde (Nono, Stockhausen).
- Many recent works have expanded spatial horizons, including ...*quasi una fantasia*...(1987-88) and *Op.27 No.2 'Double Concerto'* (1989-90)
- Kurtág's major contributions to chamber music repertoire includes three string quartets and *Hommage à R Sch* (1990) for clarinet, viola and piano
- He is deeply interested in training musicians, best illustrated by his unique on-going series of piano studies, *Játékok* (1975- ), which are used worldwide
- His music is championed by leading conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Simon Rattle, Christoph von Dohnányi and Peter Eötvös



## R. Murray Schafer Composer

*"R. Murray Schafer's manifold personal expressions and aspirations are in total accord with the urgent needs and dreams of humanity today."* — Yehudi Menuhin

**Composer / Librettist / Artistic Director** – R. Murray Schafer is one of Canada's pre-eminent composers and is known throughout the world. In an era of specialization, R. Murray Schafer has shown himself to be a true Renaissance man. Born in Sarnia, Ontario in 1933, Murray Schafer has won national and international acclaim not only for his achievements as a composer, but also as an educator, environmentalist, literary scholar, visual artist and provocateur. After receiving a Licentiate in piano through the Royal Schools of Music (England) in 1952, he pursued further studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto, followed by periods of autodidactic study in Austria and England, which encompassed literature, philosophy, music and journalism. A prolific composer, Murray has written works ranging from orchestral compositions to choral music, as well as musical theatre and multi-media ritual.

His diversity of interests is reflected by the enormous range and depth of such works as *Loving* (1965), *Lustro* (1972), *Music for Wilderness Lake* (1979), *Flute Concerto* (1984), and the World Soundscape Project, as well as his 12-part *Patria* music theatre cycle. Murray Schaefer's most important book, *The Tuning of the World* (1977), documents the findings of his World Soundscape Project, which united the social, scientific and artistic aspects of sound, and introduced the concept of acoustic ecology. The concept of *soundscape* unifies most of his musical and dramatic work, as well as his educational and cultural theories. Murray's other

major books include *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music* (1975), *Ezra Pound and his Music* (1977), *On Canadian Music* (1984), *Voices of Tyranny: Temples of Silence* (1993), and *The Thinking Ear: On Music Education* (1986). He has received commissions from numerous organizations as well as several prizes. He was the first winner of the Glenn Gould Prize for Music and Communication as well as the Molson Award for distinctive service to the arts.

R. Murray Schafer has repeatedly challenged and transcended orthodox approaches to music and the presentation of music. Through his unique explorations of the relationships between music, performer, audience and setting, he has expanded the potential and appreciation of music and its place in the arts and culture of his time. Many of his compositions and writings stand as landmarks in the evolution of music and its communication in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His many string quartets are a major contribution to the quartet literature and have been performed and recorded by the Orford and Molinari Quartets. In 1991 the Orford String Quartet's recordings of his complete works garnered the ensemble two Juno Awards.

Murray Schafer has been honoured with many awards throughout his career. As first recipient of the *Jules Leger Prize for New Chamber Music* in 1977 for his String Quartet No. 2, he continued to attract praise, accepting the *Prix International Arthur-Honegger* in 1980 for String Quartet No. 1, and the *Banff National Award in the Arts* in 1985. He has continued to be recognized for his "strong, benevolent and highly original imagination and intellect" as the first recipient of the triennial *Glenn Gould Award* presented by Sir Yehudi Menuhin in 1987. In 1983, Schafer was awarded the *Canada Council Molson Prize for the Arts* for his outstanding contribution to the cultural and intellectual life of Canada. In 1999, Mr. Schafer received the Ontario Arts Council's first *Lifetime Achievement Award*.

Mr. Schafer has been celebrated artist-in-residence at many prestigious new music festivals, such as the Seattle Spring Festival of Contemporary Music, and the Sixth Annual duMaurier New Music Festival. Last year, he was composer-in-residence at Stratford Summer Music, where several of his works were performed.



## Molinari Quartet Guest Artists

Acclaimed by the public and Canadian critics alike since its foundation in 1997, the Molinari Quartet performs works from the 20th and 21st centuries repertoire for string quartet, as well as commissions new works and, where possible, initiates discussions between musicians, artists and the public. The members of the Molinari Quartet are violinists Olga Ranzenhofer and Johannes Jansonius, violist David Quinn and cellist Julie Trudeau.

Recipient of seven Opus Prizes awarded by the Quebec Music Council to underline musical excellence on the Quebec concert stage, Molinari Quartet was chosen in December 2000 as Music Laureate for the *Grand Prix* of the Montreal Urban Community Arts Council.

The name *Molinari* reflects the commitment of the musicians to contemporary music repertoire, since Canadian painter Guido Molinari's name has come to represent the avant-garde in art for over forty years. In addition to performing many Canadian works, the Molinari Quartet's repertoire includes quartets by Bartók, Britten, Glass, Korngold, Kurtág, Ligeti, Lutoslawski, Martinu, Prokofiev, Ravel, Scelsi, Schnittke, Shostakovich and Webern, among others.

Described by critics as an "essential" and "prodigious" ensemble, even as "Canada's answer to the Kronos or Arditti Quartet", the Molinari Quartet has established itself as one of Canada's leading string quartets. Its participation at the "Strings of the Future 1999" festival drew much

attention from the international press (*Le monde de la musique*, *The Strad*, *Strings*).

Molinari Quartet was heard twice as soloist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit, and has been invited to perform in numerous concert series and festivals, including *Strings of the Future* (Ottawa), *Musiques au présent* (Québec), *Festival Vancouver*, *Music Toronto*, *GroundSwell* (Winnipeg), *Saskatoon Symphony Festival of New Music*, *Aeolian Concerts* and *Hill and Hollow Music* (New York). The ensemble performed for the Gala 25th anniversary of the Canadian Music Centre in Montreal, the International Centre for Contemporary Art, the Jeunesses Musicales du Canada and, in Toronto, for the Ontario Arts Council Foundation.

The Molinari Quartet has commissioned R. Murray Schafer's 7th quartet as well as "Blanc dominant" by Quebec composer Ana Sokolovic. It also premiered works by Otto Joachim, Michel Gonneville, Michael Matthews and David Scott as well as giving North American premieres of many works.

Molinari is the only quartet to have its repertoire include R. Murray Schafer's eight string quartets and its recording of the first seven on the ATMA Classic label receive international critical acclaim. The recording received the Opus Prize for *Record of the year - contemporary, new and electroacoustic music*, and was nominated for a 2001 Juno Award in the category of Best Classical Album: Solo or Chamber Ensemble.

The Quartet is heard regularly on CBC Radio Two, and on the Chaîne culturelle de Radio-Canada.



## **Lydia Wong** Guest Artist

One of Canada's most sought after collaborative pianists, acclaimed for her 'vivacious playing' (Daily Telegraph) and 'sparkling clarity' (The Strad) Lydia Wong appears regularly with the world's pre-eminent performers.

Venues across the globe from Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City to London's Wigmore Hall have featured her expertise in partnership with such artists as Lorand Fenyves, Frans Helmerson, Rivka Golani, Scott St. John, Shauna Rolston, Patrick Gallois, and Evelyn Hart.

Following her successful Banff Centre collaboration with Krzysztof Penderecki on the North American premiere of his *Sextet*, Lydia was invited by the composer to perform at the 2001 Festival Casals in Puerto Rico.

A regular performer with the Esprit Orchestra since 1998, she recently recorded Alexina Louie's Piano Quintet with the Accordes String Quartet for release on CentreDiscs. Lydia can also be heard on Marquis Classics and Phoenix Records and has performed for networks in North America, Africa and Europe besides broadcasting regularly for the CBC. A faculty member of the summer music program at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada since 1992, she joined the faculty of the University of Toronto in 1998.

Winner of Britain's prestigious Ivan Sutton Recital Prize, Ms. Wong also received numerous awards from the Canada Council and the

Floyd Chalmers Fund. She holds the Concert Recital Diploma from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, England where she was a scholarship student, as well as a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto. Principal teachers include Paul Berkowitz, Pierre Souvairan and Boris Berlin, and she has worked intensively in master classes with Karl Schnabel, Menahem Pressler, Geoffrey Parsons and Leon Fleisher.

Born in Hong Kong, Lydia emigrated to Canada in 1973 and now makes her home in Toronto with her husband, cellist Simon Fryer.



**Alex Pauk**  
Conductor /  
Music Director of Esprit Orchestra

Named *Musician of the Year* by a jury of his peers in 1999, Alex Pauk is recognized for 30 years of fiercely championing new music in Canada. The Toronto Musicians' Association lauded Pauk for outstanding work with Esprit in innovative programming, fundraising, obtaining and granting commissions, keeping musicians working in difficult times, and demonstrating an ongoing dedication to educating Canada's young people about new music.

A prominent and influential composer in Canada with a growing international profile as composer and conductor, Esprit Orchestra's music director and conductor has commissioned new pieces from more than 60 composers.

Pauk helped establish ArrayMusic in 1971, and founded Toronto's award-winning Esprit Orchestra in 1983 to focus on contemporary classical music, early 20th century music, and scoring for film. He has also

conducted the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, CBC Vancouver Radio Orchestra, Hamilton Philharmonic, Winnipeg Symphony, and many smaller orchestras and ensembles throughout Canada.

Recently, Alex completed his European tour debut to wide critical acclaim, conducting five Esprit Orchestra concerts in Holland (Gaudeteamus International Music Week) and France. And, with two Canadian tours successfully completed, Pauk plans to take Esprit to New York and Boston soon.

Pauk often performs the Canadian premieres of works by leading international composers – Takemitsu, Ligeti, Berio, Adams, Penderecki and Lindberg. And, he regularly invites outstanding soloists to perform with the Esprit Orchestra – Richard Stoltzman, Maurice Bourque, Richard Margison, Maureen Forrester, Jon Kimura Parker, and the percussion ensemble NEXUS.

Scoring, conducting, arranging and producing new music for top Canadian film directors – Don McKellar, Jeremy Podeswa, Larry Weinstein – has further made Pauk and Esprit a force in Canadian music production. As director of Esprit, Pauk collaborates often with composers, filmmakers, video artists, dancers and set and lighting designers, to produce unique multimedia, cross-disciplinary concert experiences.

Beyond feature films, Pauk has contributed to CD recordings, musical theatre, dance and visual arts productions, feature films, made-for-TV dramas, documentaries, docudramas and animations, plus five performing arts films. Produced by Rhombus Media, these include: *The Eternal Earth*, *The Radical Romantic*, *Ravel, For the Whales* and *September Songs: The Music of Kurt Weill* (with Pauk and Esprit on camera). The 1986 Actra Awards nominated his music for the National Film Board animation *Blackberry Subway Jam* as best film score.

When composing for film, Alex works in partnership with his vibrant, equally celebrated wife, Canadian composer Alexina Louie. Their styles and genres cover a wide range of music, including popular music. Recently, the Pauk/Louie team scored soundtracks for the award-winning feature films Don McKellar's *Last Night* and Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*. The music for *Last Night* was nominated for a 1999 Genie Award for best original film score.

Other recent soundtracks include *After the Harvest*, a made for television movie directed by Jeremy Podeswa, *24 fps*, a short film commissioned for the 25th Anniversary of the Toronto International Film Festival, and the Rhombus Media docudrama *Ravel's Brain*, directed by Larry Weinstein. Pauk recorded the *Ravel's Brain* score in Cologne while conducting the

WDR Symphony Orchestra and the WDR Radio Choir.

To date, Pauk and Esprit have recorded five CDs of Canadian music for CBC Records and two film soundtrack CDs – one for the Varese Sarabande label (music by Mychael Danna for Atom Egoyan's films) and one for the SONY Classical label containing the Pauk/Louie score for McKellar's *Last Night*. CBC Radio regularly records Pauk's concerts with Esprit for national and/or international broadcast, and Esprit events are often broadcast on the BRAVO! Television channel. Internationally, Pauk's work on compact disc has been recognized with Esprit's *Music for Heaven and Earth* receiving a five-star rating by BBC Music Magazine (1996), and composers Harry Freedman, Alexina Louie and Colin McPhee, receiving nominations and/or JUNO Awards for collaboration with Pauk.

CBC Radio frequently records and broadcasts Pauk conducting Esprit in programs of music by Ravel, Debussy, Ives, Weill, Elgar, Falla, Rodrigo, and Bernstein. Under Pauk, Esprit has received many awards acknowledging its visionary role in lending new meaning to what an orchestra is today. They are: The 1990 SOCAN Award of Merit (for imaginative programming); The Jean A. Chalmers National Music Award, 1995 (for outstanding contribution to musical creativity); three Lieutenant Governor's Awards for the Arts – 1996/1998/2000 – (for developing private sector and community support); and two Financial Post Business in the Arts Awards (for distinction in business involvement with Esprit's high calibre and innovative music presentations).

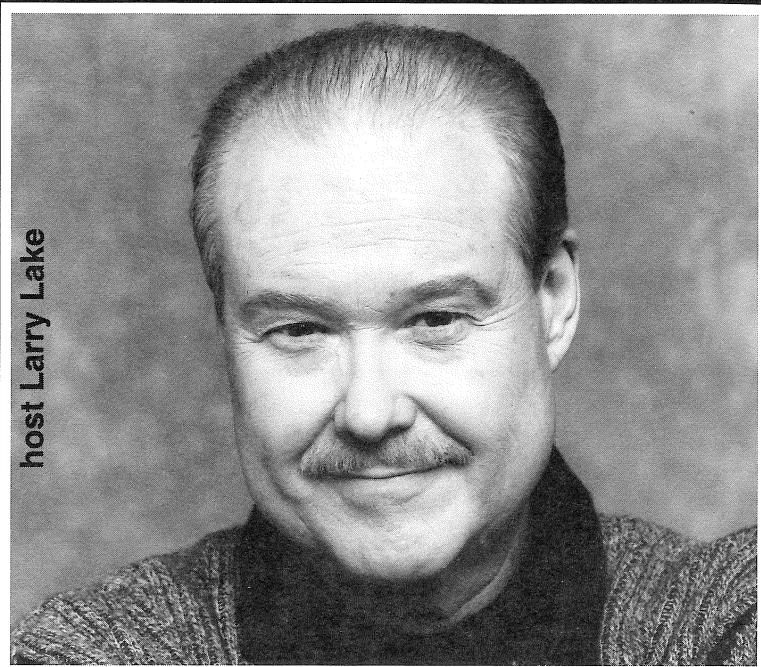
Pauk recently completed a soundtrack for *Perfect Pie with Alexina Louie*, a Rhombus Media film directed by Barbara Sweete.



# TWO NEW HOURS

Hear the Esprit Orchestra on  
Two New Hours

host Larry Lake



Two New Hours, Sundays at 10 p.m.

94.1  
CBC radio Two

# Programme Notes

## *...quasi una fantasia..., Op. 27 (1987-88) for piano & groups of instruments*

### Notes by Barbara Croall, Composer

- I: Introduzione. Largo
- II: Presto minaccioso e lamentoso. Molto agitato, sempre *pppp*
- III: Recitativo. Grave, disperato
- IV: Aria – Adagio molto. Lontano, calmo, appena sentito

We hear a descending scale in C major opening up from a seeming nothingness, to divergent pathways. This haunting introduction encapsulates Kurtág's thinking, or hearing, *in different directions* – taking a line, or a narrative, and dividing it into separate gossamer-like strands.

Emphasized even further through spatial design, it perhaps suggests the *psychological placement* of sounds in his mind space, for soon after being pulled along by the gravity of such a familiar gesture of Western music as the descending major scale, we are already floatingly suspended within a constellation, whereby we still sense the linear 'connectedness' between things. Yet, at the same time we experience them as separate entities unto themselves, from an ever-rotating three-dimensionality. The piano maintains the focal point – the center of gravity and fulcrum from which everything else is hinged. Is Kurtág's Op. 27 a reference to Beethoven – two piano sonatas of the same opus – from a quasi-Schenkerian perspective? Does his musical thought turn this way?

Kurtág once said: "My mother tongue is Bartók, and Bartók's mother tongue was Beethoven." What exactly did he mean by this? Just as soon as we become comfortably lost within this sphere of sound, we are suddenly jarred, with only a slight forewarning – the symbolically 'loaded' snare-drum roll – by a backward motion of fleeting images. We feel we are falling into a wormhole with hardly enough time to focus on any singular thing other than the culminating dance of the piano, a Schumannesque take on Goethe's Faust. This is a fantastical journey, which spins us to a darker place, subsequently announced with declamatory drums after reaching the end of a swirling tunnel. A scene of war, perhaps, or a forwardly processional march through a world of devastation? With the decisively hammered episodes of drumming, we begin to feel that we are in the presence of Goya's 'Colossus' – something we would like to crouch and hide from. Should we fear it? Or is the magnitude of it just too imposing and difficult to comprehend?

No sooner has this menace stomped it's way through our consciousness than it has departed, and the introspective 'reflectiveness' of the piano takes us to a flattened plane of innocence – Prospero's island of "sad serenity" – the see-sawing motion suggestive of nursery rhymes... the infant listening in wonderment to the diffusion of sounds from its mother's voice, singing imitatively along to her. The clinging of high-pitched bells – is this some kind of temple? This special place covered by an invisible doom. Or, is that just the glint of sun on waters, far off in the distance? Proceeding slowly, but with soft steps, we walk toward the light, which briefly flashes like a sun-reflecting mirror signaling us, beckoning. It is from this blinding whiteness that we ourselves begin to feel transparent – mere apparitions – and then descend again. We follow the piano tune which leads the way back toward the center which, when nearly reached, feels with every tired and slowing heartbeat like sinking into a down-filled bed from where we began this *fantasy* in our sleep. The journey was imaginary: We've returned to the near-nothingness from whence we came.

*The mind is a free creature.  
Neither with chains, nor with rope, can it be bound,  
But all the time, day and night, in our dreams when we sleep,  
It wanders.*

The musical theorist Schenker believed in *epigenesis* – unfolding – as a natural tendency of creative ideas to sonically open-up from one tone: The center of consciousness.

Likewise, Kurtág believed in the all-encompassing meaning of the single tone – as did Webern, Schoenberg, Messiaen, and many others, going back even beyond Beethoven (who could only hear this internally, in his imagination, after all sense of sound left him). The resonance that extends from the single note in Kurtág's imagination becomes his "diffused unity" – something that pours out of one singular source, *that* which itself is still an enigma... a mystery...

## **Messages, Op. 34 (1991-96...)**

### **Notes by Barbara Croall, Composer**

Those who quest for *truth* often seek it through messages – some of which are obviously hidden to us, and others which are ‘hiddenly’ obvious (hiddenly hidden?...obviously obvious?...). György Kurtág searches for meaning in his most recent works in this way, namely in those works unashamedly ‘in progress’ and meant to be heard as such to be meaningful (and for us to understand them as he wishes). While Kurtág reveres mystery, he also believes in communication and in being understood.

Kurtág’s *messages* are yet another turn in his predilection for fragmentation for he is a master at finding meaning and deep ‘sense of the whole’ in his expressions of knowing only its bits and pieces. In Kurtág’s music, fragments are as much about the past as they are about the present and the future.

The past decays, falls apart, seems broken up, shifts constantly in its order when we try recollecting it. The present is either a fleeting moment, or an intensely, separately focused and protracted experience of one nanosecond, depending on one’s context. And the future? The future lies ahead of us as something we grasp for (or pull back from in apprehension). It is a glimpse of something elusive, and of something we think we know, yet without certainty, something we ponder for that very reason: Do we follow it, or not; wonder at its significance before it can in fact become that – *significant*? Is time really linear...? Progressive? Logically ordered, or even measurable?

Kurtág’s lifetime fascination with the *linguistic* message is evident with his settings of Kafka and various other ‘message pieces’ for string quartet: *Ligatura – Message to Frances-Marie (The answered unanswered question) op. 31...* and *op. 31/b* (a revised answer to an unanswerable question?). His fascination reveals his relentless focus on pithy little riddles, separating and rearranging their components and order. However, Kurtág is equally capable of seeking messages in the monolithic, as we see in his haunting and hypnotically ‘present’ music for orchestra, *Stele op.33 (1993-94)*. Looking at an ancient stone monument, say, or any kind of structure that suggests something of ‘the past’ – shrouded in mystery, perhaps, standing in the midst of a mist-filled meadow – gives us a unique understanding or a ‘piece’ of what it was, is, may become. In this way, Kurtág’s message may be coercing us to experience all the dimensions – or representations of them – at once, simultaneously. He may be coaxing us to abandon our conditioning and step, rather, into our inherently perceptive capabilities.

Tonight's performance of György Kurtág's *Messages* op. 34, a collection of 'pieces' with an unprescribed order and non-assembled parts, of variable selections and sequencings, makes as much sense to us as to Kurtág. The pieces are not movements-in-a-series, neither are they intentionally programmatic or descriptive minatures. They are *poetic*. And it could be said they are 'sound poetry.' However, they are not stanzas of a poem.

Just listen to them as *they are*, and decide for yourself which order you'd like to hear them in. Or, accept them all at once – as layers lain transparently atop one another. Most importantly, simply enjoy listening to them for their true meaning to be revealed.

### ***Messages, Op. 34 (1991-96...)***

- *Uzenetek; Messages*
- *Virág az ember ... Kocsis Zoltanak; Flower is man... for Zoltan Kocsis... in memoriam Otto Kocsis*
- *Level Eotvos Peternek; Letter for Peter Eotvos*
- *Helyzetkep; Snapshot (of the present)*
- *Nehány Szó Jeney Zoltához; A few words to Zoltan Jeney*
- *Aus der Ferne; From a distance (or 'From a far')*
- *Hommage to Alfred Schlee 85*

\* Note: Some words in Hungarian do not translate precisely into English.

Tonight's performance is presented with The Canadian Consulate General of Hungary

### **Upcoming Kurtág Performances**

New Music Concerts presents: April 13 at The Glenn Gould Theatre *The Music of György Kurtág*; chamber and vocal works with soprano by Ingrid Atrot; Robert Aitken conducting; includes the North American premiere of *Vier Capriccios*, Op.9 for soprano and fourteen instruments. And, April 6 at the Royal Conservatory of Music: *Perspectives on György Kurtág* – a symposium & film presentation.

April 20 – in London, England, György Kurtág with his wife Márta open a Kurtág Festival, ***Signs, Games & Messages***, with a piano duet recital. The festival is among SBC's most ambitious composer projects and the first large-scale retrospective of Kurtág's music in the UK. The **Royal Festival Hall** and **Royal Academy of Music** present 18 concerts with educational events.

## György Kurtág Online

György Kurtág can be found on the World Wide Web at: (Kurtág's Publishers) Editio Musica Budapest <http://www.emb.hu/>; Sinfonietta [www.londonsinfonietta.org.uk](http://www.londonsinfonietta.org.uk); Arditti Quartet [www.ardittiquartet.com](http://www.ardittiquartet.com); BBC Singers [www.bbc.co.uk/singers](http://www.bbc.co.uk/singers); Hungarian cultural Institute; [www.hungary.org.uk](http://www.hungary.org.uk); (Kurtág is represented in the UK, British Commonwealth, the Republic of Ireland, Canada and the USA by) Boosey and Hawkes [www.boosey.com](http://www.boosey.com); Royal Academy of Music [www.ram.ac.uk](http://www.ram.ac.uk)

### ***Four Forty, for String Quartet & Chamber Orchestra***

#### **Note By R. Murray Schafer**

Finding a suitable title for a piece is sometimes difficult. At first I thought of calling the new work 'Capriccio' because it included numerous playful elements, but that word seems dated today. When I totaled up the number of players in the CBC Vancouver Chamber Orchestra, they came to 40 (including the conductor). With the four soloists that works out to be 4-40, a significant number for music, since A440 is the frequency sounded by the oboe for tuning up. The note 'A' became important in the composition, and in the second movement the quartet actually tunes up, as if they were fastidiously concerned to get the 'A' precisely accurate.

*Four-Forty* was commissioned by Music Canada 2000 Festival Inc. and Festival Vancouver for the St. Lawrence Quartet and the CBC Vancouver Chamber Orchestra for performance at Festival Vancouver on August 3, 2000.

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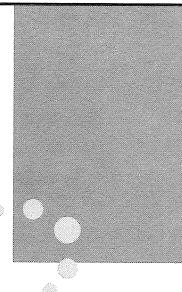
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**Latecomers will not be admitted until a suitable break in the performance or intermission. This is done at the discretion of House Management. The use of photographic equipment, personal stereos or recording devices is strictly prohibited by law in this theatre. Please check them with House Management. The St. Lawrence Centre does not accept responsibility for lost or stolen articles.**







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*Au Croisé, le silence, seul, tient lieu de parole*

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